

# SURVIVING THE SMOKE-FREE ZONE

Arizona Department of Corrections  
Health Service Bureau

Inmate Wellness Program  
HEP 1003-01/06

Now that you have quit smoking tobacco, you maybe experiencing some discomfort called **WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS**. Most withdrawal symptoms will disappear within 1½ to 2 weeks. **YOU** not only need to be able to recognize the withdrawal symptoms, but **YOU** need to know what to do to help yourself overcome them.

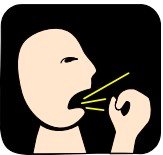
The most familiar symptom is the **CRAVING**. The best way to get rid of a craving is to ignore it. When you experience a craving for a cigarette, try techniques that will take your mind off smoking, for example: Touch your toes 10 times, do a brief relaxation exercise, or in some other way divert your attention briefly away from the craving. Once your attention is diverted, the craving will go away.

**TENSION** may also occur. The process of stopping smoking is at least mildly stressful for everyone. The amount of concentration required to remember not to smoke and to resist the multiple temptations to smoke is stressful. All this stress may make you tense or nervous. Relaxation exercises may help you relieve this symptom.



**TINGLING** sensations or numbness in your arms and legs may occur. This happens due to the improved blood circulation in your body since you quit smoking. When your body is back to normal, the tingling or numbness will cease. It is best if you try to ignore the sensation and wait for it to stop on its own.

You may feel **LIGHT-HEADED** or dizzy when you stop smoking. You might also find it **DIFFICULT TO CONCENTRATE**. These are symptoms related to the increased supply of oxygen that your brain is getting now that carbon monoxide is no longer entering your body and there is an increased blood flow in your body. As your body becomes used to the increased oxygen levels, these feelings will decrease and go away, so just be patient.



You might find that you **COUGH** more after you stop smoking. Now that you have quit smoking, you will cough up debris left in your lungs from when you smoked. Once the lungs are clear again, your cough will leave for good.

Now that you are aware of the withdrawal symptoms connected to quitting smoking, you need to know what types of

behavior you can do to help ease them. Some **SUGGESTIONS** are: Drink plenty of water (several glasses a day); eat hard candy or vegetable snacks; increase your physical activity by gradually increasing the amount of daily exercise you engage in; and do relaxation exercises.

**TYPES OF RELAXATION EXERCISES** are deep breathing and muscle relaxation exercises. Both types should be used frequently for best results. The more they are used, the better effect they have on your body. To do deep breathing exercises, it is best if you stand. Place your feet in a comfortable position about shoulder width apart. Close your eyes and let your head bend forward. Drop your head further down and slowly inhale through your nose. Draw your breath deeply into your lungs, allowing your abdomen to expand and your head to slowly rise as you inhale. Hold your breath gently, and now exhale slowly. Breathe out through your nose. Repeat this breathing exercise at whatever pace feels comfortable. Stop for a few minutes if you get dizzy. Take your time, and when you feel ready to stop, just slowly open your eyes.

To do muscle relaxation exercises, it is best for you to stand with your feet planted firmly on the floor. Now close your eyes. Tense your feet and grab the floor with your toes. Tighter. Now run the tension up through your thighs, up through your abdomen and chest. Make them tense; tighter and tighter, then move to your shoulders. Drive the tension down your arms to the hands; close your fists. Now, up through your neck, face, mouth, and even your eyes. Now make your scalp tight. Hold the tension for a moment - then relax. Take your time and relax all over. When you feel relaxed, slowly open your eyes.

Along with managing your symptoms of stress through relaxation exercises, you can benefit from learning how to better manage the actual sources of stress in your life. One key to this is expressing what you feel and think **WITHOUT** controlling, dominating, or hurting other people. Another way of managing stress is to change the way you think about events. Steer clear of destructive thinking.

Understanding what happens to your body after you quit smoking will help you decide what coping techniques will be best for you to overcome your smoking withdrawals. Mastering your coping techniques is the key to surviving the smoke free zone.